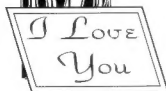


The Henningburg Saga 1865 - 1982



**Written by:
Willa M. "Billie" Henningburg
May 1987**

*DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY
OF
ALPHONSE HENNINGBURG*

The Heningburg Saga

**Written by
Willa Mae Heningburg**

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Beverly Lynn Ballard

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photo libraries from Willa M.
Heningburg, Gustav Heningburg and
Michael Heningburg, Sr.

Dedication

The Heningburg Saga is dedicated to my sons Gustav and Michael and my grandchildren: Anne Rene , Gustav II, Michael, Jr., and the rest of the Heningburg Clan.

It is 1987, and at this point in time I have chosen to write *The Heningburg Saga*, with special reference to my husband, Alphonse Heningburg. My hope is that the knowledge gained by my sons and grandchildren from this brief history will enhance their love and appreciation of him and they will realize that he made a significant contribution to the times in which he lived.

Perhaps generations of Heningburgs, yet unborn, will see this document and be happy to have this information, though meagre, about their ancestry which dates back to the 18th Century.

The Heningburg Ancestry

In 1865, a ship bearing African men and women who were meant to become slaves arrived in Mobile Bay, Alabama. It was on this day that U.S. President Abraham Lincoln signed an amendment which would free slaves all over the country. Prior to that date, President Lincoln had signed the "Emancipation Proclamation," which freed slaves in certain parts of the country. When Lincoln signed the amendment freeing all slaves, I know that African-American and other slave descendants must have used the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. who more than a century later said, "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, we are free at last."

An African woman on that ship was to become a Heningburg ancestor. She married an American Native Indian. The daughter of this union became the wife of Antoine Heningburg. The family feels reasonably certain that this African woman was the ancestor of Antoine Heningburg, the father of Alphonse.

It is recorded in the Hall of Records in Mobile, Alabama that this daughter, whose name was M. Perez, married Antoine Heningburg. Further research into the paternal family background gave no clue on the country from which the first known Heningburg in America may have come, however, some family members believe Germany was the country of origin; others think it may have been Austria. My son Michael, who was in the military and stationed in Germany brought back a Heningburg plaque from that country. However, that is not conclusive proof of the country of origin.

The marriage of Antoine Heningburg to the daughter of the African woman and Native American Indian produced nine children. These children were mostly copper-colored; with high cheek bones and black hair (a sign of their Indian ancestry). The youngest of the family, Alphonse, and a sister, who were fair-skinned, perhaps resembled the father (whom I never met). Although none of the children of this family were called Antoine, it became the name of a few of the grandchildren.

To understand the Heningburgs, it is important to know something of the mores of the people of Mobile, who had been influenced by the nations of France, Spain, and England who at various times had occupied Mobile. Mobile is a coastal city and is surrounded by Mobile Bay which flows into the mighty Mississippi River. This easy access to the oceans of the world led Mobile to become a cosmopolitan port city.

The College Years

One of the most memorable events during the Tuskegee years came through Alphonse's relationship with the noted scientist, George Washington Carver. Dr. Carver, sensing Alphonse's "potential" took him over as his protege'. I'm sure that many of his values in life were shaped through this close relationship with the great scientist. Carver has been described by Alphonse as gentle, kind and compassionate, with one of the greatest scientific minds of the century. When the Tuskegee years ended, and since Alphonse was the Valedictorian of his class, he was offered and accepted a Rosenwald Scholarship to Grinnell College in Iowa. That same year, Hampton Institute was given a scholarship which was awarded to Collis Davis. These two were the first men of color to attend Grinnell College.

During those years, Alphonse had to work to supplement his scholarship for he received no money from his father or family. He became an expert at shoveling snow, for there was much snow to be shoveled in that cold part of the country! His part-time work became a part of his full-time education. As a pullman porter, his travels led him to parts of the country that otherwise he might never have seen.

It was at Grinnell that he began his study of the French language. He says that he was the only student in the French class. He used to tell the story of his French teacher, who on occasion when the weather was harsh, would knock on his window to get him out of bed. As a young man from the deep south, Alphonse found it difficult to face the cold winters of Iowa. The days at Grinnell ended with a "Bang" as he graduated Cum Laude with a Phi Beta Kappa Key.

The Early Winston-Salem Years: Alphonse the School Teacher

After graduation, he washed dishes in a restaurant in Des Moines, Iowa while seeking employment as a teacher. His first teaching job came from the Winston-Salem [North Carolina] high school.

Two significant things happened to him during the Winston-Salem years. First, he came to realize that education was the field to which he wished to devote his life. Apparently he was an excellent and outstanding teacher. Years later he would meet men and women from Winston-Salem who greeted him with reverence, and they would let him know how his teaching helped shaped their lives.

Secondly, he met and fell in love with his first wife, Madeline Davis. Madeline Davis was a senior at Wilberforce University in Ohio the same year that I was a freshman. We became friends and as was the custom in those days, it was natural for her to contact my family when she came to Winston-Salem for her first teaching job after graduation. My family found her a very lovable and charming woman. She liked the family also and she and Alphonse became frequent visitors to my family's home. The first time I met Alphonse was during Christmas vacation of my freshman year at college. He and Madeline, and my boyfriend and I had a great holiday together.

The second year of Alphonse's teaching career began at Tuskegee Institute where he had been called to head the Department of Romance Languages. In the meantime, Madeline returned to her home in Birmingham, Alabama and they were married. Dr. George Washington Carver attended the wedding wearing a new pair of shoes. His new shoes became the most sensational part of the wedding, for it was well known throughout the college community and the city that Dr. Carver never bought new clothing or shoes for any occasion!

Sadly, the marriage lasted for a very short time, six months or so, for Madeline was afflicted with tuberculosis and died. Alphonse then became Tuskegee's most eligible bachelor, for he was young, handsome, an intellectual, and had a promising future ahead of him.

Studying at the Sorbonne, France & More of Tuskegee: Alphonse the Young Man

The next phase of Alphonse's life began when Dr. Moton, president of Tuskegee, secured a scholarship for him and sent him to France.

Off he went for two years of study at the Sorbonne, the University of Paris. The adjustment to living in a foreign country was not difficult for him because by this time, he had acquired a fluency in both French and Spanish and knew some Italian. I'm sure that the two years spent in Paris were the most exciting he had experienced in his young life to date.

During his stay in France, the Moton's came over to visit with him and to travel around Europe. They brought along their daughter Catherine. They left her in Paris with Alphonse and travelled to the other European countries. Alphonse believed that the Moton's hoped for a romance to brew. But it didn't happen. Neither Alphonse nor Catherine had a romantic interest in one another.

The rumor at Tuskegee was that Dr. Moton, who was nearing retirement, would name the next president and that person had to be the husband of his daughter. And so it happened that Dr. Fred Patterson, who became Tuskegee's third president, married Catherine Moton.

Alphonse continued his quest for knowledge and his desire to travel. Once he realized that one need not attend class, but only pass examinations to pass a course, he requested his Russian girlfriend to take notes for him. He would board a freighter and visit other countries in Europe where he gained a great deal of knowledge about people and their cultures.

At the end of this two-year period, he received with honors, a degree that would be comparable to the Masters Degree in this country. On his return to the United States, he became Tuskegee's first Personnel Director.



Willa Mae "Billie" Heningburg as a young college girl.
(Circa 1928)



The marriage of Alphonse Heningburg & Willa Mae Scales
made the society column in the Winston-Salem newspapers.
(1929)

Our Marriage & Children: Alphonse & I

The year was 1928, when on a bright and beautiful summer's day, a Chevrolet bearing an Alabama license plate drove up and parked in front of my home in Winston-Salem. I immediately discovered that the occupant of the car was Tuskegee's "most eligible bachelor," whom I had not seen nor had any contact with for approximately four years. I had graduated from college and completed one full year of teaching by this time.

At this moment, as I write this history, I suddenly am aware that the memories of me, though short, must have been very compelling for him. He allowed me four years to finish college and one year for the beginning of my career before he came calling.

When he came to Winston-Salem, he knew why he'd come and within a day of his arrival I knew why he'd come. Before he left to go back to Tuskegee, my family knew why he'd come, for "Tuskegee's most eligible bachelor" and I were engaged to be married.

On August 21, 1929, we were married. An article from the newspaper described the wedding as the most beautiful wedding Winston-Salem had ever witnessed and they stated that I was the daughter of William Scales, one of the most celebrated and well known men in the town. Over the years, I have lost the news clipping of the wedding, but the following quote summarizes the engagement announcement.

"Winston-Salem --Mr. and Mrs. Scales of E. 4th Street, among the most prominent members of the race, announce the engagement of their daughter Willie Mae to Professor Alphonse Heningburg, Instructor at Tuskegee Institute. Willie Mae Scales is one of the prominent teachers at Columbian Heights high school and is well known in this city."

"Professor Heningburg, who was an instructor at Columbian Heights high school several years ago, is one of the noted professors of this country. For the past two years or more, he has been engaged at the famous Booker T. Washington Tuskegee Institute."

For the first part of our honeymoon, we were the guests of Dr. and Mrs. Moton at their fabulous estate in Capahosic, Virginia. This estate included a "big house" for the family and quaint little cottages for guests dotted along the edge of the Capahosic River. We occupied one of the cottages and had complete privacy to be alone and really get to know each other. Ours had been a long distance courtship and being alone was really important.

This interlude was charming and romantic. We would wake up with the sounds of sea life all around us; and to the added sounds of birds singing to us with the approach of dawn. Again, at twilight, the birds would come to twitter and bid us a happy good night. Our honeymoon was a lover's paradise and our love flourished and flowered in this beautiful romantic setting.

We left Capahosic for Annapolis, Maryland where I was the Matron-of-Honor in my good friend, Polly Fletcher Weeden's wedding. I was pleased to be her Matron, for it made me feel very married. Alphonse and I left the wedding and went to Chattanooga to visit friends, and then the honeymoon was over. It was on to Tuskegee where our life as a married couple really began.

The very first thing we had to do on our arrival at Tuskegee was to find suitable housing. With a little maneuvering, we eventually moved into a very beautiful house on campus which had been occupied by Alban Halsey. We lived in that house for many years.

Soon after we were comfortably settled, Mrs. Moton, [who thought that every able body should be working] offered me a job as YWCA secretary with student Florence May as my assistant. I found myself hoping that Florence knew more about the job than I — for I knew nothing. I had been having a very good time playing tennis, swimming and enjoying the student activities. I was not interested in being a YWCA secretary. However, I was pregnant and didn't have many months to work. In the meantime, Alphonse was developing as an outstanding speaker, and was invited to speak before organizations and institutions throughout country.

Our baby, Gustav was born on May 18, 1930; and when the baby was 8 or 10 weeks old, Alphonse was asked by President Hoover to head an Education Commission to Haiti to examine their educational system and to bring back recommendations for changes, if needed. Alphonse was a natural for this position because of his expertise in the field of education and his fluency in French; the language of Haiti. It proved to be a successful venture. As a result of the findings of the Commission, many changes were made which greatly improved the Haitian educational system.

While Alphonse was in Haiti, Richard Morrison, a student helper and



Alphonse Heningburg and his oldest son,
Gustav Heningburg with the family's St. Bernard "Sancho"
(Circa 1932)



The beautiful Adrienne Heningburg
December 1934 - April 1938

friend, was left to help me care for the baby. Even though Richard subsequently became president of one of the state colleges, neither he nor I knew anything about taking care of a baby.

During our learning period, my mother heard of my plight and sent my sister Vi to Tuskegee to bring the baby and I home to Winston-Salem. When my mother came to the train station to meet us, her first comment when she saw Gustav was "poor little baby." My mother, who had raised four children, transformed "poor little baby" into a "well-nourished" baby. After being in my mother's care, he made great progress. When we returned to Tuskegee at the end of Alphonse's mission in Haiti, Alphonse saw his son and decided that Richard and I had done a good job with the baby. Oh, if he only knew! He brought a beautiful christening dress for Gustav from Haiti.

In 1934, Alphonse was given a scholarship to study for his Ph.D. at New York University. That was also the year I became pregnant for a second time. We produced a beautiful baby girl named Adrienne. Unfortunately, the scholarship money did not go very far, so we took a basement apartment in the Village to be near the University.

Alphonse and Dr. Payne (Dean of the School of Education) became great friends. His wife was very lovely and charming. Often she came to our basement apartment to see me and check the progress of our baby. The apartment was great for one reason only—we could put the baby in the yard in her crib, and there she would get air and sunshine. On one occasion the Payne's invited us to dinner to meet another guest, James Weldon Johnson who among other things, wrote the Negro National Anthem, entitled "Lift Every Voice."

Another couple, Dr. & Mrs. Roberts also welcomed us with open arms. He was one of Harlem's outstanding physicians and she was the daughter of the Secretary of Tuskegee. He offered to take care of all our medical needs without charge.

On any Sunday afternoon, their home, (a beautiful and spacious town house in the midst of Harlem) became a gathering place of the elite. Their home became the hub around which a movement of vigorous and intellectual activity among the colored elite of Harlem was swirling. This movement became known as the "Harlem Renaissance." We became involved in this movement and found it to be an unforgettable and great experience for the both of us.

Tuskegeean, whatever their status, and others were welcomed. On these occasions we had the privilege of meeting other famous Americans such as Langston Hughes, Hale Woodruff, Roland Hays, and his pianist, Will Lawrence. Eventually, the year in New York ended, and we went back to Tuskegee.

Alphonse had finished the courses for his degree, but the final thesis was a long way off. In 1938, he was elected President of the American Teachers Association, an organization of black teachers from around the country, which later merged with the National Education Association.

Past presidents of the two organizations, now merged, were invited with all expenses paid to attend the annual meetings. My husband and I took advantage of these opportunities to keep up with trends in education and to renew old friendships with the presidents we had come to know over the years. I remember one funny thing which happened while he was president and was traveling around the country in that capacity. On this occasion he brought home a bottle of champagne from California. I had never tasted champagne and my comment when I tasted it was "what delicious ginger ale."

The Tuskegee years at this point became rather routine. Alphonse was enjoying his job as personnel director. Additionally, he was still being called upon to speak at various institutions throughout the country.

The children were growing beautifully with Gustav a student at the "Children's House." Although Adrienne was still too young for school, an art teacher gave a program and asked me to have Adrienne stand on stage, as someone in the background intoned these words:

"...a thing of beauty is a joy forever."

She was truly the most beautiful child I had ever seen. Then, out of the blue, tragedy struck our family and life was never the same again.

Adrienne had gone to Montgomery with my friend and her children to visit the children's grandmother. The children were running across the street when a car came along. Adrienne was struck and gone forever. This happened on Good Friday and on Easter Sunday her funeral was held in the Tuskegee Chapel.

There is no way to explain what the tragedy of losing our beautiful four year old child had done to all of us. Fortunately, soon after the death of our child, my husband was invited to come to Durham, North Carolina to serve as Vice President of North Carolina College for Negroes in Durham. That college has since become part of the University of North Carolina.

We were glad to leave Tuskegee with its sad memories. We later learned that our house had been renovated and became the home of the fourth president of Tuskegee, Dr. Luther H. Foster.

In the meantime, we had decided to have another child, so when we left Tuskegee I was pregnant and looking forward to the arrival of my third child, Michael. To this day it is a mystery to me as to why my baby was born at Duke Hospital. This birth took place before the civil rights movement, when everything at Duke was "for whites only."

While living in Durham, two important things happened. Our son Michael was born and my husband settled down to finish the thesis for his Ph.D. for New York University.

Unfortunately, Alphonse had taken so long to write the paper that he could only qualify by taking another course. Since no black man could attend a white university in the South, he could find no graduate school in the area which would afford him the opportunity to get the credit that he needed.

At that point, the president of Duke University came to the rescue and suggested that he, the President, would arrange to have one of the Duke professors conduct the course at the professor's home. Thus, Alphonse completed the thesis for his Ph.D.



Dr. Alphonse Heningburg as a public speaker
(mid - 1950's)

New York City: Alphonse The Speaker & Lecturer

In 1943, a call from the National Urban League came to invite Alphonse to become Education Advisor for the League. Being "Gypsy-like," we were soon on our way again. As we left Durham, the country was at war; housing was at a premium. Therefore, we left Gustav in Winston-Salem with my parents.

Upon arriving in New York City, we stayed with friends and then in a small apartment at 409 Edgecomb Avenue at 155th Street. Eventually, we found a house in St. Albans, Long island where we lived for the remainder of our lives together. The house that we wanted was in a section of Queens called Addesleigh Park. At that time all houses in that section were under a covenant which would not permit them to be sold to people of color for 90 years. Our old friend, Dr. Payne of New York University, came to our rescue. He purchased the house that we wanted, and then sold it to us.

In the meantime, the year that Gustav spent in North Carolina with my parents offered some unusual and exciting experiences for him; especially as he became really acquainted with my father who was one of Winston-Salem's most successful black businessmen.

Farming was dad's hobby. Early on, my brothers and sisters and I had enjoyed the farm with him and now the fun continued with the grandchildren. They had great times together. On the farm there was a mule called "Ole Blue" and this mule was one of the special treats of the farm especially for the grands who rode him as a group! After Gustav's summer vacation, we were all together again at 127 - 176th Street, in St. Albans.

Alphonse continued to develop as an outstanding lecturer. His job at the Urban League gave him the opportunity to continue to travel and lecture all over the country. One of the groups that he became very friendly with was the Quakers. He became especially friendly with Chum and Dottie Paxson who had a boys camp in the Poconos in Pennsylvania. On one occasion, Chum suggested that he would like to have a black boy at the camp, all expenses paid. He asked Alphonse to help him find the youngster. Alphonse immediately found Gustav who became the first black youngster at the camp.

Gus spent several summers there, became a counselor and later a Trustee of the Board of Directors for the camp. I remember one other black boy who went to the Poconos. He was the son of the first black man to receive the Nobel

Prize, Ralph Bunche. During this period Alphonse was often invited to lead seminars for the Quakers. Mike and I sometimes accompanied him to these meetings and we had a good time with these liberal and friendly people.

During our early years in New York, money was a scarce commodity; so Alphonse began moonlighting by teaching at the graduate school of New York University, Yeshiva University and Hunter College. The salary at the Urban League was so low that he eventually accepted a job as Secretary to the New York City Department of Welfare. He stayed with the City for only a short period of time, for he had begun to realize that his most important contribution lay in the field of education.

Alphonse then took a job as Professor at Adelphi University on Long Island and there he remained until he became an administrator in the schools of West Hempstead, Long Island. West Hempstead is a suburban village adjoining the larger City of Hempstead. The population of the village was about 90% Jewish and 10% gentile. There was no black population.

It was in this school system that Alphonse administered the Audio Visual activities of the school. Through the years he had become very interested in Audio Visual projects and he found it rewarding to be able to use his creativity to develop the programs in this area. He made many friends in this community, especially among the ladies.

Once, he was asked by a primarily Jewish organization to become coordinator of their group. On one occasion, the ladies had invited a southern gentile woman to be the guest speaker. She was introduced by Alphonse, who always introduced the speakers. Somewhere in her speech she talked about the "color-red" people [a southern pronunciation for black people] -- as good cooks, good housekeepers, etc. and she added "I am sure Dr. Henningburg would know about these "color-red" people because he comes from the south." She knew that much about the coordinator. What she didn't know was that the coordinator, who was fair in complexion, was one of those "color-red" people. It was beyond her comprehension that a black man would have this position in this elite Jewish organization.

The audience, who knew their BLACK coordinator, was terribly embarrassed as she talked about "color-reds." However, Alphonse, in his response to her speech, and with his droll sense of humor, put his audience at ease when he said to the lady that she was absolutely correct in assuming that he knew the "color-reds," for "as a matter of fact", he said, "I married one of them." I don't know how the speaker was feeling, but the audience was hysterical with laughter.

Sag Harbor, Long Island New York

One day in 1950, Alphonse announced that he would build a summer house on the eastern end of Long Island at Sag Harbor. This was a disturbing announcement for I didn't believe that he could build a house. Well, for more than three decades, three generations of Heningburgs have found joy and relaxation in this summer cottage.

Our older son Gus, was then a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army, stationed in Europe. Mike, working with his dad on the house once commented that he would never again live in a house as it was being built!

Sometimes it rained on us as we slept but we just moved our cots to a place that was dry and went back to sleep. House building was not all bad for Mike. Usually, at the end of a working day, he would gather up his friends, Andy, Mary Ellen, Mike Jones and others, and off they would go in the Hillman Minx station wagon to the "hot spots" in the village where I'm sure they had lots of fun. With the dawn of another working day, Mike Jones would lie outside Mike's window waiting to see him get started on the days work. The days rolled into years and eventually our delightful cottage had no leaks and no mosquitoes.

By this point in time, our boys had grown into young men who were beginning careers of their own. Gus had finished his stint in the Army and was married and living in New Jersey. He was working for the United Negro College Fund and doing a very commendable job. Mike, following in his brother's footsteps was in the Army and had reached the rank of Major.

It was at this point in 1962, that the U.S. State Department offered my husband a two-year job in the North African country of Tunisia.



Alphonse & Billie at Sag Harbor
(Circa 1971)



Alphonse Hen ngburg (standing 2nd from left) meets with Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt
(Circa 1943)

Our Tunisian Adventure

Tunisia had, for centuries, been a colony of the French government. The country became a Republic on July 25, 1957. President Bouguba was appointed as the head of the government and continued in that post when we arrived some six years later.

Three nations, namely France, Russia and the United States decided to build the University of Tunisia. Alphonse was selected to represent the U.S.A.'s interests in building and staffing the University. The official language was French, but the remainder of the populace spoke Arabic. Since Alphonse would be "at home" in a French speaking country, we packed our baggage, including our little Peugeot, and headed for Tunisia.

The recorded history of this country dates from the First Millennium BC when the Phoenecians founded many settlements, the most famous of which is Carthage. Carthage was the center of this civilization for centuries as various people of other countries passed through leaving marks of their own cultures. Some groups like the Danes, Poles and Italians, wanted to destroy the ruins of Carthage. Others believed it to be a place of everlasting beauty. It was indeed curious to discover what was true and untrue about this legendary city which had been the most hotly contested piece of real estate since 814 B.C. One author wrote:

"...Punic Carthage is not and never will be an Athens, Baalbek, Rome or a Lepcis, Magna. There simply isn't enough left. But it could become — if more international and local aid can be solicited and Tunisians persevered in a more determined way to recapture their past — one of the most evocative and physically beautiful ancient sites on earth."

Upon arrival, we found a pleasant house in Garmarth, overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. The home was surrounded by beautiful flowers and covered with Jasmine which gave it a delightful aroma. There were lemon trees which bore three different kinds of lemons. A maid and a gardener (who were nomads) were included with the rental of the house. While they did not speak French, they understood the language so they and my husband were able to communicate. I, on the other hand spoke only English, but I could smile. Since they could smile also this became our means of communion!

One of the most fascinating and memorable events about this house is the fact that prior to our moving in, it had been a bordello. During the early part of our stay there, Alphonse had great times with the business phone calls which kept our telephone constantly ringing! Our house was located near the ancient ruins of Carthage and on many a moonlit night we visited those ruins. There was a feeling of timelessness as one wondered what the people were like and what their aspirations must have been those many centuries ago.

During one period of my stay in Tunisia, I became very depressed and had what the State Department defined as "cultural shock." For me, it was just plain home-sickness and a desire to see my family. My sons were made aware of my condition and Mike sat for two days in an airport waiting to get a free ride to Tunisia. He made it, and we had a great reunion in that far away country. His visiting with me in my time of need made me very happy to know that he cared so much. We travelled to many of the surrounding cities while he was with us, and had a great time together. His dad provided his return fare so he did not have to wait days to make the trip home.

My funniest experience in Tunisia occurred one bright sunny morning as I was driving along the highway to our home in Garmarth. All at once I could see a great line of cars approaching from behind. As they began to pass, the men waved frantically in my direction. Of course I smiled and waved back. I could see that they were not smiling, but I kept smiling and continued on my way.

Later, when I told my story to Alphonse I was informed that the group of cars was President Bouguba and his entourage and that their waving was not a friendly greeting, but an effort to push me to the side of the road until the President had passed. Thank God they didn't throw me into their pokey, or better yet, out of the country. I decided later that the President and his staff must have thought I was just a crazy woman, and/or an ignorant American since I didn't move over as expected!

We also had the opportunity to visit many cities in Tunisia during our stay which included visits to various schools. We met children and talked to adults of this ancient civilization.

When our Tunisian adventure ended we returned to our home in New York.

Prodmiere
the maid
Tunis



Left: The Tunisian maid
Prodmiere.

Below: The House in
Tunisia overlooking the
Mediterranean sea
(Circa 1963)

the house in Tunisia
overlooking the
Mediterranean sea



Salute to Negro Leaders

This is American Negro History Week

In recognition of their contributions to American culture, community life and civic affairs, The Press today salutes prominent Negro residents of Long Island.

Among those outstanding in their fields are:

DR. ALPHONSE HENINGBURG of West Hempstead, prominent educator and lecturer who is audio-visual aids director of West Hempstead Schools and an active civic worker.

MOXEY A. RIGBY of Freeport, an assistant Nassau district attorney, who also is active in civic affairs.

MRS. S. DOROTHEA CUMBERBACH of Wyandanch, founder and vice president of the Suffolk Chapter of the National Council of Negro Women and an executive board member of the Central Long Island Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She also is active in school and community groups.

BOY CAMPANELLA, the Brooklyn Dodgers' Ace catcher and the National League's Most Valuable Player who recently moved to Glen Cove.

CAR CALLOWAY of Long Beach, bandleader and musical comedy star, who's currently on a barnstorming tour of the country. One of his most famous pop tunes is "Minnie the Moocher."



Dr. Alphonse Heningburg, an educator and expert in the field of audio-visual aids, serves the West Hempstead School District.

Long Island Daily Press Newspaper February 18, 1956.
Dr. Heningburg honored during American Negro History week on Long Island.

My View: Alphonse the Person

Thus far, I have written a great deal about my husband's career and our life together. Now comes the time when I tell something of what he was like as a person. He was gentle, kind, and compassionate to all who knew him. He was eager and willing to assist those who asked for help in solving a problem.

Alphonse was great with both children and young people; especially the young ladies. When he worked in West Hempstead, at lunchtime, his office was the place where the young teachers gathered for fun and camaraderie.

In our Long Island neighborhood, there was a teenage girl whose father, a doctor, committed suicide. Soon after her father's death, she would appear on our back porch almost daily to see Alphonse. He would play records for her and talked with her in a way that I felt became important for her survival. However, there was a very sad ending to this story. This young lady went through college and on to Medical School to become a psychiatrist. Soon after she finished her formal training, she too committed suicide. Rather than request a minister, her mother asked Alphonse to deliver the eulogy.

Another youngster in our community became one of Alphonse's great friends. The girl was the severely handicapped child of Count and Catherine Basie who were our neighbors. Dianne could not talk nor feed herself, however Alphonse would take her for walks. He felt the sounds she made while with him was her form of communicating.

As our sons reached their teen years, their father dealt with them as if they were adults whenever he was approached by either child who had a problem. Alphonse would outline both the positive and negative consequences of any problem. He always allowed the children to make the final decision where their own lives were concerned. I believe this approach gave the boys a sense of independence which helped each of them survive their growing years. It is also my feeling that our sons, to a great extent, use this same technique with their own children.

Alphonse also loved parties. One of his most prestigious parties was given to honor Dr. Helen Edmonds who was a U.S. Delegate to the United Nations and a president of the National Links, Inc. [a group with which we had become involved years earlier]. Among friends who signed our guest book were of course the Basie's, and another neighbor who was the first black man to break the color line in the game of baseball, Jackie Robinson.



Alphonse, Bill & Michael share a moment in the family home
in St Albans, New York.
(Circa 1951)



GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY—Dr. and Mrs. Albertson Heningburg celebrated their wedding anniversary in Reston, Va.

The Heningburgs are flanked by their children, Susan (left) and Michael (right), during a formal portion of the celebration.

1979

Heningburgs celebrate golden anniversary

RESTON, Va. — Forty friends and relatives gathered here Oct. 11 to help Dr. Albertson and Susan Mae Heningburg of S. Ales and Sag Harbor, N.Y., celebrate their golden wedding anniversary.

The Heningburgs are wife and husband. Susan Heningburg is a teacher at S. Ales and Susan Mae was a student at Washington College, Washington, D.C.

The couple married on August 11, 1939, in Washington, D.C. They have two sons, Susan and Michael, and three grandchildren: Susan, John and Michael.

Dr. Heningburg is a professor of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and Susan Heningburg is a professor of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Guests and family gathered at the home of Susan Heningburg and her husband, Dr. Heningburg, for a formal reception and then were entertained at the home of Susan Heningburg and her husband, Dr. Heningburg.

The South and the East Coast to join in tribute and to make the couple's anniversary and to make the couple's anniversary and to make the couple's anniversary.

Also present were Heningburg, Susan Heningburg and Susan Heningburg, Susan Heningburg and Susan Heningburg, Susan Heningburg and Susan Heningburg.

Also present were Heningburg, Susan Heningburg and Susan Heningburg, Susan Heningburg and Susan Heningburg, Susan Heningburg and Susan Heningburg.

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Sons Gustav & Michael host a 50th Wedding Anniversary celebration for their parents at the Marriott Hotel at Dulles Airport. A reception was held later at the home of Michael and Susan Heningburg in Reston, Virginia (1979)

On Alphonse's 75th birthday, we gave him a party to celebrate this occasion. We prepared for approximately 100 guests. As the day arrived it began to snow and snowed all day long. In spite of the fact that our guests had to trudge through mountains of snow, they arrived from Westchester and Nassau County. Our children came from Virginia and New Jersey to be with Alphonse on this great occasion. Catherine Basie, who by now lived in the Caribbean, called and wished him well. It was an emotional and very beautiful party.

The highlight of our marriage arrived when we celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary. Several of our friends in Sag Harbor: Ellen and Joe Hart, and Claire and Robert Lett, decided to give us a party. Many of our other Sag Harbor friends whom we had known for more than 30 years celebrated with us.

However, the big party was ten days later in Reston, Virginia. Our sons and charming daughter-in-law Sandi, hosted this party. The cocktail party was held in Mike and Sandi's home. Our guests were transported to the Marriott Hotel at Dulles Airport. Friends came from Alabama, California, Florida, Hawaii, New York City, and yes, from Sag Harbor as well.

Then two unexpected guests arrived from the Caribbean. It was Catherine Basie and her daughter Dianne. We felt honored and loved as we realized that so many people had come great distances to share in our happiness. Three of the people were original members of our wedding party — Polly Weeden of Lynchburg (Virginia); Elanor Peeler of Greensboro (North Carolina); and my sister Gwen who had been my Maid of Honor. The next day we were entertained in the beautiful home of my niece and her husband, Kay and Wendell Holloway. Thus the anniversary ended, but the memory lingers on to this day.

As I near the end of *The Henningburg Saga*, I would like to mention just a few other touching occasions concerning Alphonse Henningburg. Of all the past events in which Alphonse was either the honoree or the speaker, there were four events which I cherish the most:

March 3, 1953 — Testimonial Supper honoring Catherine Basie, Alphonse Henningburg was the principal speaker;

February 18, 1956 — The Long Island press published a salute to Negro leaders during Negro History Week (now called African-American History Month) — the article included comments about Alphonse Henningburg;

February 20, 1958 — For a Brotherhood Banquet sponsored by the Levinson Steel Company in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Alphonse was the keynote speaker;



Gustav, Alphonse, Billie (seated) and Michael at
the 50th anniversary celebration in Reston, VA.
(1979)



Eldest son Gustav Heningburg
(Circa 1990)



Youngest son Michael Heningburg
(Circa 1990)



Sons Michael and Gustav vacation
in Copenhagen, Denmark
(Late 1950's)

December 7, 1958 — Memorial Service for Dr. Robert Russa Moton.
Dr. Moton was the second president of Tuskegee Institute.
Alphonse Henningburg gave the Memorial address;

Another occasion involves the person who occupied the chair of the Russian Language Department at Howard University. I had the opportunity to meet this young man who had been a former student of Alphonse's at Tuskegee. He said that Alphonse was the most exciting teacher he ever had. He made the comment that even though Alphonse was the teacher of French, the students were introduced to sociology, history, art, and many other facets of the world around them. On Men's Day in 1980, the St. Alban's Congregational Church invited as their guest speaker of the worship services, my son Gustav Henningburg who also hosts a public affairs show on WNBC-TV called "Positively Black." The important item about this Men's Day was the fact that a special program had been put in place to honor Alphonse Henningburg. Letters from L.H. Foster, President of Tuskegee, and Fanne Harris, a Director of Alumni Affairs touched my heart. The Northeast Regional Tuskegee Alumni Association remembered Alphonse as "an inspiration to us all," and mentioned how past Tuskegee Alumni programs live on in the memory of Alphonse Henningburg.

I opened this biography with a quote from a Tuskegee man, Albert Murray, author of "South to a Very Old Place," and I end with a quote from Murray on the Henningburgs:

"Students at Tuskegee will always remember Alphonse Henningburg and his beautiful wife."

On July 22, 1982, at the age of 80, my husband slipped quietly into eternity. May his soul rest in peace.

With his passing I was left desolate. I have survived with the love of my children, grandchildren, family and friends. Most importantly, I have five decades of good memories to sustain me.

As I say adieu, I am hoping that this brief sketch of our 53 years together will increase the knowledge and enhance the appreciation and love for a great human being who was your father, grandfather, relative, or friend.



Top Grandson Mickey's 11th birthday party celebrated in East Orange, New Jersey. Seated "cousins", Mickey's maternal grandmother Thelma Wright and Anne Renee. Standing: Gustav, II, Mickey's Godmother Arlene Scotland, Alphonse, Sandi, & Mark Scotland.
(1965)

Bottom Mickey & Alphonse share Christmas in Reston, Va.
(1976)



Dr. Heningburg enjoys his grandchildren Anne Renee and
Michael "Mickey", Jr. on the beach at the Sag Harbor home
(Circa 1968)



Top Bill leading grandson Gustav II on a horse ride at Sag Harbor
(Circa 1965)



Bottom Brother and Sister, Gustav II and Anne Renee pose while visiting
grandparents at Sag Harbor
(Circa 1965)

In Loving Memory



*Alphonse Henningburg, Ph.D.
January 15, 1902 - July 22, 1982*

My loved ones, as I conclude this "memory filled collage" of
Alphonse Henningburg, I wish you peace and God's blessings,
with the gift of His love.

"Hold fast to dreams,
For if dreams die,
Life is a broken winged bird
That cannot fly."

Langston Hughes

THE END

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DR. ALPHONSE HENNINGBURG
Lecturer

and

SADIE KNIGHT, Soprano
William Lawrence, Accompanist

at

Siloam Presbyterian Church
260 Jefferson Ave., Brooklyn, New York

Rev. Milton A. Galamison, Pastor

Sunday Jan. 24, 1960 — 4 p. m.

Sponsors \$2.00

Patrons ★ \$1.00

Proceeds for the benefit of B. B. of A. S. N. H.



Dr. Heingburg is director of Audio-Visual Services for the schools of West Hempstead, L. I. where he works with both Elementary and High School teachers. For several years he was Coordinator of the Human Relations Workshop of the Woman's Forum of Nassau County.

He has taught at Tuskegee Institute, North Carolina College, New York University and at Yeshiva University. For three years, he was Director of Education Services of the National Urban League and Secretary of the New York City Department of Welfare.

11.

SADIE KNIGHT, lyric soprano, in her Town Hall recital of last June, received high praise from the critics of the New York Times and Herald Tribune. As a winner of the Marian Anderson Scholarship Award, she made her New York debut in 1951. For the past several years she has been giving recitals in the Eastern and Southern states. In the Fall of 1958, on a tour to Africa, she was the special guest of the Prime Minister of Ghana, and gave concerts in Ghana and Liberia.



PROGRAM

Mistress of Ceremonies	Vivian Cobb
Negro National Anthem	
Invocation	Rev. Milton A. Galamiso
Greetings	Hortense Beveridge Pres. of B. B. of A. S. N. H.
Vouchsafe, O Lord	Handel
Aria: Ritorna Vincitor, from "Aida"	Verdi

SADIE KNIGHT, Soprano

William Lawrence, accompanist

Introduction of guest speaker	Ernest Dimitry
Address	'The Challenge of America for All Races and Creeds' Dr. Alphonse Henningburg
To the Queen of Heaven	Dunhill
Silent Strings	Bantock
My Souls Been Anchored in the Lord	Arr. by Price

Sadie Knight, Soprano

In recognition of Mrs. Rosetta Gaston's Outstanding work with the Association, a Birthday Celebration honoring her Seventy-Fifth Anniversary will be held in the dining hall immediately following the program.

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A Documentary Panorama
December 15, 1974



Founded by
Booker T. Washington

Atrium
Kennedy Center
Washington, D.C.

Host:

Washington Tuskegee Alumni Club
and Tuskegee Office of Federal Relations



- 4:00 p.m. Registration Atrium
Kennedy Center
Solo Mr. Robert G. May, II
*Class of '74, Former Tuskegee Institute
Choir Member*
- 4:30 p.m. Presentation of
Master of Ceremonies Mr. Clarence A. Johnson
Master of Ceremonies Mr. Forrest P. Wiley
Greetings Dr. Velma L. Blackwell
The Occasion Dr. B. D. Mayberry
Solo Mr. Robert G. May, II
Introduction of Speaker Dr. H. Douglas Covington
Film "Because We Care"
Speaker Dr. Alphonse Henningburg
- 5:30 p.m. Questions and Answers Session
Salute to Tuskegee Institute Honorable Johnny Ford
Mayor, Tuskegee
His Excellency Messanvi K. Kekeh
Ambassador of Togo
Profiles of Area Tuskegee Alumni Dr. Lawrence Gary
Presentations Dr. B. D. Mayberry
Remarks and Recognitions Dr. L. H. Foster
- 6:30 p.m. "Rapporture Session"
Adjournment

(North Carolina)

HENINGBURG

Dr. Alphonse Heningburg, a nationally known educator, lecturer and human relations expert, died of natural causes in Orange, New Jersey on July 22, 1982 at the age of 80. Born in Whisler, Alabama, Dr. Heningburg was educated at Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama. He was granted a Rosenwald Fellowship and matriculated at Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa. In 1924 he was graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a bachelor of arts degree. He studied at the University of Paris and was granted a diploma with honors from the Sorbonne in 1927. A doctor of philosophy degree was awarded him in 1959 from New York University where he specialized in teachers' college administration and personnel administration. Dr. Heningburg held teaching positions at Slater Teachers College, Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama; North Carolina College, Durham, North Carolina; Adelphi College, Garden City, New York; and Hunter College and Yeshiva University in New York City. Before retirement he was an administrator in the West Hempstead, New York public school system. In addition, he served as interpreter and special advisor to the Hoover Education Commission in Haiti in 1970. Director of Education Services of the national Urban League, and as Secretary of the New York City Department of Welfare. The United States State Department sent Dr. Heningburg to Tunisia to direct the establishment of the entire public education system after that African nation gained its independence from France. In 1938 Dr. Heningburg was elected President of the American Teachers Association, an all black educational organization which later merged with the National Education Association.

Very active in community affairs, he worked with Boys Harbor, New York and was a member of the St. Albans, New York Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. He was the recipient of numerous awards for his professional and civic work. Dr. Heningburg is survived by his wife, Willie Mae of East Orange, New Jersey; two sons, Gustav, Sr. of Secaucus, N. J. and Jersey and Michael, Sr. of Reston, Virginia; three grandchildren, Anne Henne and Gustav, Jr. and Michael, Jr. A graveside service will be held in Winston-Salem, North Carolina where his remains will be inurned August 28 at 2 p.m. at Evergreen. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to the Tuskegee Institute Alumni Association Fund and forwarded to Gus and Heinburg, Sr., 650 Broad Street, Suite 1500, Newark, New Jersey 07102. The family is at the home of P. and Mrs. W. R. Crawford, sister and brother-in-law. Hoffer Funeral Directors.

03 SEP 22 AID: 53

NEWSPAPER
INFORMATION
SECTION

AARON P. LEVINSON
P. O. BOX 1817
PITTSBURGH, PA. 15230

October 15, 1982

Dear Billie:

Thanks for sending the notice of Alphonse' death. Sonia and I were talking about both of you just this summer and wondering if everything was okay. It's been such a long time.

I loved Alphonse; he had all the qualities that I admire in a human being; he was warm and loving and so very bright. He was a man of integrity. He cared about all living things, especially about people less fortunate than himself. He was gentle and yet he could be counted on to take charge of anything and to do it well. He knew the meaning of excellence and integrity.

Alphonse was truly a great man. He had simple tastes and a great love for his family and his friends. A column and one-half in the Winston-Salem Journal listing all of his accomplishments could be summed up in a few words, "He knew the meaning of excellence and he cared." I know many people will miss him, none more than you and your family.

We will make a contribution to Tuskegee Institute Alumni Association Fund in his memory.

Sonia joins me in extending our very deepest sympathy.

If you ever get anywhere near Pittsburgh, please call us.

Love,



Mrs. Willa Mae Henningburg
320 S. Harrison St., 14M
East Orange, N.J. 07018

Gordelia D Oliver
1100 Bolton St., Apt 1117
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

July 24, 1982

Dear Billie,

I was deeply saddened to hear of Alphonse's passing. I know of your feelings at this time, since I experienced the loss of both my beloved mother and mother-in-law within the span of a few weeks. As I recall the experience now I would never have dreamed that I would have come through it all as strongly as I did. You too will be surprised at the way you will be able to bear it all, — even the moving to a different home, which I too had to experience at the same time.

You will not or cannot now realize that you will ever feel better. But —

You will be happy again.
Courage!!! To live requires courage; — a basic quality which God gives us all. You will experience moments when courage alone will stand between you and what may seem "impending disaster". You will know what to do

because God will be with you. He is always with you. Never forget that.

When you need a listening ear, call on me. Though I cannot be with you at this time please remember this little verse:

"Sorrow

Can never conquer

No grief turn to despair

When there are others

Who care."

Gery Webster Dufres

I care! I remember Alphonse and I share your sorrow.

Fondly,

Gordelia

(301) 525-8165

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July 26, 1982

Mrs. Willa Mae Henningburg
c/o Gustav Henningburg Associates, Inc.
605 Broad Street
Suite 1500
Newark, NJ 07102

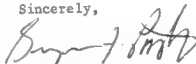
Dear Mrs. Henningburg:

All of us at Tuskegee Institute are deeply saddened to learn of Dr. Henningburg's death. You and your family have our heartfelt sympathy.

Dr. Henningburg's life was one of outstanding contributions, both to his profession and to his community. His Alma Mater was very proud of his accomplishments and deeply appreciative of his devotion to Tuskegee Institute. He will be sorely missed by Tuskegeans and those of us associated with the Institute.

We are grateful for your wish to have contributions in his memory sent to the Tuskegee Institute Alumni Fund.

Sincerely,



Benjamin F. Payton
President

BFP:p

Ella Haith Weaver
215 East 68th Street
New York, New York 10021

August 11, 1982

Dear Joe,

I only learned of this fund in
memory of Alphonse when I talked to
Kelly recently. (There were no notices in
the NY papers.) So, please accept the
enclosed - the tardy - from Bob and me.
I loved that guy!

As ever,

Ella



611 Scott Avenue
Ft Leavenworth, KS 66027
23 August 1982

Mr. Gus Henningburg
605 Broad Street
Suite 1500
Newark, New Jersey 07102

Dear Gus:

Alma and I were saddened to learn of the death of your father. I was very close to Doctor Henningburg, and a great admirer of his over the years. He will be greatly missed. Alma joins me in extending to you and your mother our heartfelt condolences.

I am enclosing a contribution to the Tuskegee Alumni Fund in his memory.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

COLIN L. POWELL
Brigadier General, USA

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Albert D. Jerome
Executive Vice President

July 27, 1982

Gus Henningburg
605 Broad Street
Suite 1500
Newark, NJ 07102

Dear Gus:

I was very sorry to learn of your father's death. Michele and I extend our deepest sympathies to you and hope that your faith brings you through these difficult times.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'AJ', written in a cursive style.

AJ/tmj

GUSTAV HENINGBURG ASSOCIATES, INC.

605 BROAD STREET, SUITE 1500

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102

(201) 624-6715

P R E S S R E L E A S E

For further information:

Beverly L. Ballard
(201) 624-6715

Dr. Alphonse Heningburg, retired supervisor of Audio Visual Services for the West Hempstead Long Island School District, died of natural causes at St. Mary's Hospital in Orange, New Jersey on July 22, 1982. He was 82 years old.

During his long career as an educator, Dr. Heningburg taught at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama; was Vice President of North Carolina College (now North Carolina Central University), in Durham, North Carolina and taught at New York University, Yeshiva and Adelphi Universities after moving to New York in 1944. He also served on the staff of the National Urban League.

He was born in Whistler, Alabama in 1902, as one in a family of 19 brothers and sisters. He attended Tuskegee Normal School in Alabama, Grinnel College in Iowa, the Sorbonne in Paris, France, and earned his PhD from New York University.

He was a nationally known educator, lecturer and human relations expert. Fluent in Spanish and French, the U.S. State Department sent him to Tunisia in 1962 to oversee the establishment of the entire public education system after that African nation gained its independence from France.

-continued-

Dr. Heningburg is survived by his wife, Willa Mae Heningburg; his son Gustav who is host of Positively Black on WNBC-TV; his son Michael, Director of the Bureau of Student Services of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C.; three grandchildren, Anne-Renee, Gustav, and Michael, and several sisters and brothers.

Dr. Heningburg's remains will be cremated, and a memorial service will be held at a later date in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The date of the service has not yet been established. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to the Tuskegee Institute Alumni Association Fund, and mailed to Gustav Heningburg 605 Broad Street, Suite 1500, Newark, New Jersey 07102.

-30-